

Minutes: Iowa Council for Early ACCESS

Date, time, and place

Date: November 20, 2009
Time: 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Place: Stoney Creek Inn, Johnston, Iowa

Attendance

Present: Gladys Alvarez, Jeff Anderson (for Mary Nelson), Jodi Angus, Maggie Baker, Daryl Beall, Mike Bergan, Jane Borst, Mary Jane Brotherson, LaMark Combs, Gina Greene, Andrew Hall, Angela Hance, Julie Hahn, Kelly Hancock, Brad Kollars, Stacy Kramer, Heather Moorman, LauraBelle Sherman-Proehl, Carrie Soddors, Beth Troutman, and Debra Waldron
Staff: Julie Curry, Marion Kresse, Cindy Weigel, Dee Gethman, Angi Walker, Rae Miller, and Meghan Wolfe
Excused: Michael Acarregui, Angela Burke Boston, Sara Freiberg, Ron Koch, Jo Ann Stone, Barbara Merrill, Mary Stevens, and Nansi Woods

Call to order

Kelly Hancock called meeting to order, introductions of Council members and guests took place. Established quorum.

Approval of previous minutes

The council reviewed the minutes from September 18, 2009; one staff member was moved from list of present council members to the present staff section; one duplicate name was removed from the list of present council members.
Action. Motion to approve the minutes with corrections was made by Jodi Angus and seconded by Gladys Alvarez. The motion passed.

Topics discussed

The table below identifies the topics discussed in the meeting and the person who led each discussion.

| Topic | Discussion Leader |
|---|--------------------------|
| Family Story | Gina Greene |
| Lead Agency & Signatory Update | Kelly Hancock |
| Overview of upcoming legislative session | Senator Beall |
| APR Indicator C-3, Early Childhood Outcomes | Dee Gethmann |
| APR Indicators C-1, C-2, C-5 & 6, C-7, C-8 | Early ACCESS state staff |
| ICEA Committees | Chair of committees |
| Sharing | ALL Council members |

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Family Story

Gina Greene

Gina shared her “Welcome to Early ACCESS” PowerPoint presentation. Gina used a truck to represent the implementation of IDEA Part C. The wheels on the truck represent The Iowa Departments of Education, Health, Human Services, and Child Health Specialty Clinics. As the lead agency, the Department of Education is in charge of ensuring that the law is implemented. The analogy is when you have a flat tire; your car does not run. This should be a balanced system - you need all four tires for your car to run properly. Family is the most important aspect of Early ACCESS. The family should be the ones driving the truck. Three main components must be provided to families. The service coordinator is present to help the family move through the system. The service coordinator should not be driving, this may be necessary at times, but hopefully the family will then be able to take over again. The second component is evaluation. We must provide a full evaluation to each family. In Iowa eligibility is based on a 25% delay or a known condition. The third component is an IFSP, Individualized Family Service Plan. The service coordinator is helping the family to determine what they want and need. If you are providing a service that is not what the family wants, the family can choose to “dump” you out of the truck. We emphasize listening to the families, to ensure that we are helping them in the way that they would like. Once the child turns three we do not want the family to “fall off a cliff”, so transition is very important.

Lead agency and signatory updates

Kelly Hancock

- The 3.2 million dollars cut to the Department of Human Services will affect services to children. However rates for childcare providers and the childcare assistance program were not cut. Division Administrator Mary Nelson has announced her retirement. The projected date for her retirement will be December 31st. DHS will need to identify a new ICEA representative.
- At the Executive Council meeting the Lead Agency spoke about ARRA funding. It was noted that some ARRA funding remains available, which has not been slated for a specific purpose. The executive council is working on a variety of funding proposals.
- Jody Kealey, a nutritionist with Child Health Specialty Clinics asked for guidance on referral of services after the age of 3. Ideas were generated and the Lead Agency is looking into these suggestions further.
- Julie Curry brought the quarterly report of informal system concerns. One concern was about summer services. Another concern was when an interpreter was not available for a Spanish speaking client. Both of these issues have since been corrected.

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Overview of upcoming legislative session

Jane Borst, Department of Public Health

Jane gave an update on the budget issues within the Department of Public Health. IDPH is waiting to see what the governor will decide with regard to budget cuts. On or around December 1st, the decision should be announced. The union vote on whether or not to take furlough days may affect the amount of cuts the governor makes.

Insurance policies in Iowa do not cover the audiology needs of young children. This is an issue that IDPH is concerned about but for now, this issue is not on the table for legislation this year.

The council was informed that next year's budget could be worse than this year's budget. The Department of Public Health is committed to protecting those services which provide the most benefit to the most people. Rather than cutting a little from each program, and making them all ineffective, some programs may need to be completely cut.

Senator Daryl Beale

Senator Beale noted that it is difficult to say what will come up during this year's legislative session. He would have preferred to have a special session in order to deal with the budget cuts. The first legislative issue covered will be "backfilling" those areas which are deemed necessary. Public Safety will probably be the first area to be backfilled. Education will probably receive some backfill.

Another revenue forecast will occur in December, which will dictate a lot of what we do. The decline in tax revenue is creating the budget problems. The federal stimulus dollars were able to save us for this current fiscal year; these funds will not be available for the upcoming fiscal year.

Senate file 1: Drew's bill (Senator Beale's grandson) has funding for autism services included in it. The good news is that it did not get killed. The bad news is that it did not get passed. He asked the council to continue to apply the pressure.

Senator Beale shared that the Federal Stimulus bill provided 12.2 million dollars for IDEA. The good news for Early ACCESS is that federal dollars were specifically identified for this purpose. He noted that there will be further cuts. A cut in state funds also means a cut in matching federal funds, which can make things worse for the state government's budget. Human Services and Early Education are particularly hard hit. He emphasized that each person should continue to contact their legislators.

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Annual Progress Report, C-3, Early Childhood Outcomes

Dee Gethmann, Consultant, Bureau of Early Childhood Services

Dee presented the Early Childhood Outcome Indicator data. The data looks at 3 areas: positive social and emotional skills, acquisition and use of knowledge and skills, and use of appropriate behaviors to meet their needs. "Time two" data is taken when children leave Early ACCESS services; this is compared to "time one" data, which is taken when the child enters the system.

Children's skills are compared to other children their age. "Time two" data reflects how the child is doing when exiting Early ACCESS. The results are used to calculate whether children are progressing at the same level as their peers.

The data presented represented 411 children. The median length of service is 10 months; the mean months of service it is 11 months. A number of children who entered in 2006 have not left the system when the data was collected. These children will not be contained in the sample until next year.

Exit reasons varied; 124 were eligible for Part B services. They had a developmental delay, and they continued to need specialized services to continue their development. 90 of the children withdrew at parent request. 60 of the children were referred to other community programs (such as Head Start, Nutrition) these children probably had age-appropriate skills. 63 kids reached their goals and exited prior to age three.

The council decided to leave targets static for this year, and to set a 1.5 % increase in the 2010-2011 year. This goal will apply to all six categories.

Annual Progress Report, Indicators C-1, Timely Services; C-2, Natural Environment; C-5 & 6, Children Served; C-7, Timely Evaluation and Assessment; C- 8, Transition

Early ACCESS State Staff

Julie Curry presented data on the following indicators to the council:

- C-1, Timely Services. In the last two years we have had zero times when it was not possible to have services start on the day of the IFSP meeting. The data reflects the fact that its system was built around a continuity of services and relationship building.
- C-7, 45-day Timeline: When children are referred, the clock starts ticking. OSEP looks at those that are above 95% compliance, we have been above that mark.
- C-2, Services and Natural Environments: OSEP does not want teams to be pressured to change these statistics. For some children, a non-natural environment is the best place to provide services.
- C-8, Transition: three parts, what are the steps and services needed to help families with the transition out of Early ACCESS? What are transition services? What are the steps for those children who are moving from Early ACCESS services to Part B services? 100% is the expectation, only a handful of kids statewide did not meet the timelines

- Children Served C-5, 0-1: Number of children that are birth to 1 year of age. Iowa is above average on identifying children early. The number of our providers remains constant, but every year we identify more children.

The council broke into small groups to provide feedback on each indicator.

Committee reports

Each Committee Chair reported:

- Public Policy: The Public Policy committee needs to identify some committee members that are on the Education committee who live near a senator to keep constantly reminding them of the Early ACCESS program, and how important it is. This committee will hold a phone conference with Shelia Hansen to find out information about how to work with legislators as a team as opposed to individuals.
- By Laws: the members have recommended some formatting and numbering changes. They are considering combining the Membership and Nominating committees, they will propose this change. There was some discussion as to whether the council is able to confer voting rights to a designee, as a result of a vacancy. Clarification is needed on this process.
- Parent Leadership Committee: Stacy Kramer attended the PEC conference. She will be sending reports for legislative committee, and will send an email to Parent Committee & Public Policy Committee noting some important talking points.
- Nominating and Membership Committee: The committee recommended that a council member's term needs to be notated on the membership list. The committee will work on a list of members needed for 2010, and will note which council members are on their second term and will need to have their spot filled in the future. The committee also noted that the council needs to look at updating the by-laws so that they reflect all federal and state guidelines. It was noted that at times, positions are difficult to fill mid-term.
- Governor's Report: The committee reviewed last year's governor's report. This report needs to go out closer to the start of the legislative session. The committee is looking at re-formatting some of the charts; they need new family stories, and will work on making the report more reader-friendly. A conference call will be used to create an updated draft in order to get this report out as soon as possible.

**Adjournment
3:15 PM**

Kelly Hancock noted that the next meeting will be on January 15th, she thanked everyone for participating and adjourned the meeting. Motion by Gladys Alvarez, second by LauraBelle Sherman-Proehl. Motion carried.
